

EX PARTE OR LATE FILED

MM 93-18

Ram Avrahami  
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12 February 1996

DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

Mr. Reed E. Hundt  
Chairman, FCC  
1919 M Street N.W.  
Washington, DC 20554

Mr. William Bennet  
Co-Director, Empower America  
1776 I Street N.W.  
Washington, DC 20006

Subject: Novel Solution for Controlling Impact of TV on Our Children

Dear Mr. Hundt and Mr. Bennet,

This is not an ordinary letter. It describes a potential breakthrough in approaching a subject that, I believe, is near and dear to your hearts - the impact of television on our children. Please read and consider it seriously.

The problem is well known - TV exerts more influence but conveys less values. The question is how to change the trend in a way that is democratic and harmonious with the market system.

My proposed solution is to empower parents by allowing them to decide which cable stations could and which could not be viewed inside their home. Cable companies should be forced to dismantle the 50-channel packages and allow parents a station by station selection. Each station will have its own price, and through package pricing people could keep the same channels as today at about the same prices. (see also attached letter for more detailed description of the concept.)

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This proposition immediately solves the problems of channel 35 in NY (concerned parents could deselect it up-front) and maybe PBS (if enough parents choose and pay for it, no public funding will be needed). Unlike the V-chip, the choice of parents is at the level of stations, not programs, thus eliminating the need to rate every program. This proposal does not come in place of networks' requirements, but complements them for cable TV. It simply offers more choice, in a way that is fair (no bias towards any station), democratic (consumers choose, not censors) and feasible (the technology, same as in premium channels, already exists). Most important, it returns control to the people who know best what values children should receive - their parents.

The passage of the telecommunications bill last week indicates that structural changes in the television industry will take place soon. Recent public expressions have caused me to believe that the two of you could understand, value and act upon my suggestion. It is therefore my civil duty to submit it to your consideration at this time. I am looking for no publicity, but hope this letter helps in writing better rules for television, thus helping our families and children in the future. I will be happy to help you as much as possible in clarifying the letter or the idea behind it.

Thank you for your attention. Let me know how I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,



Ram Avrahami

Attachment: Letter to Dr. Ralph Reed, dated May 31, 1995

Copy: Mr. Keith Geiger  
President, NEA  
1201 16th Street N.W.  
Washington, DC 20036

Ram Avrahami  
1001 N. Randolph St. #110  
Arlington, VA 22201  
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31 May 1995

Dr. Ralph Reed  
Executive Director  
The Christian Coalition

Subject: Strengthening the American Family Home

Dear Dr. Reed,

I read with interest your "Contract with the American Family". I too believe in the importance of the family and its values. However, it seems to me that you left out of the contract an important component of the American family life and a critical element in shaping its values - the Family Home.

While it is desirable to improve the external environment of family members, especially children, it is critical to allow the parents to create in their home the environment by which they want to raise their children. People can debate about prayer in schools, but no one will doubt the right of parents to conduct prayers around the dinner table. It is the Family Home, more than anything else, that helps parents pass their values to their children.

Unfortunately, families can no longer rely on their home as their bastion of values. As parents work more outside of the house, their children become more exposed to alternative life styles, even while being at home. Television, in particular, have become a strong source of alternative values for children. The result, many times, is that children follow what they see on TV rather than what their parents tell them.

To strengthen the American family, we must strengthen the Family Home to become again the cradle of children values. To do so, we must support the parents in controlling the information in their home. At the same time, they should not be forced to lose the valuable tool of Television all together.

There is a simple and democratic solution to this problem - dismantle the packaging system of cable TV. Allow the family to select only the channels that they desire in their home. Give parents the power to censor sex and violence, by de-selecting stations that allow such shows.

Nothing is more simple and more powerful than this suggestion. Each family could customize its television to show only the stations that it considers acceptable by its values. Parents will no longer worry whether their children are exposed to provocative talk shows in their own house. The time that their children will spend at home will be again according to the parents' values.

Moreover, the value of TV stations will be judged not by advertisers but directly by the viewers. By eliminating layers of interpretation and by means of the free market we will make the contents of television programs more in line of what people want and value. Non commercial stations, like PBS, could survive without federal funding, because they will be selected and paid for directly by their numerous viewers.

Most important, we will empower the American Family to control its core environment - the Family Home. Family values will be emphasized over external ones. As you already know, this is the best way to invest in our future.

This reform is effective and achievable. It can and should be passed before the 1996 election. As a private person, who has no relation to the television industry, I call you to act now by:

- 1) Adopting the principle that the American people bear the responsibility and the right to decide what information should enter their homes.
- 2) Implementing this principle in the case of cable TV, by requiring cable TV companies to offer complete station customization to their customers.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you for 30 minutes to discuss further the principle above and the feasibility of implementing it in the case of cable TV, as well as possible extensions to other media channels, like Internet.

Sincerely,



Ram Avrahami

CC: The Honorable Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House  
The Honorable Al Gore, Vice President of the United States of America

February 8, 1996

DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

The Honorable Reed Hundt  
Federal Communication Commission  
1919 M. Street NW  
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman:

I am writing in reference to improving television viewing for young children - tomorrow's leaders. My organization, the Chadburn Evening Extension Homemakers Association is concerned about the programs now on television for children. There is so much violence portrayed, in so many various ways, seemingly with ~~no~~ little consequences.

We strongly feel that certain strong specifications and rules should be mandated for those who are responsible for the making and production of children shows. The shows should be well advertised in advance, with certain values and objectives in mind for young children. The programs should have strong informational and educational values. Parents have a big responsibility for their children's television viewing. These young children are our future.

Sincerely,

Doris W. Thompson  
Family Issues Chairman  
Chadburn, N.C. 28431

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FAMILY CENTERS

31 S. Penn St. P.O. Box 328  
Allentown, PA 18105  
(610) 821-2619

DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

February 12, 1996

The Honorable Reed Hundt  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street, NW, Room 814  
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Hundt:

On behalf of the Allentown, Lehigh County Family Centers, I am writing to encourage you to strengthen the guidelines for the Children's Television Act of 1990 (MM No. 93-48).

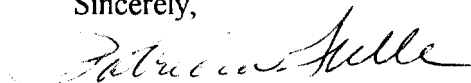
Broadcast television can play an unprecedented role in nourishing the minds of our nation's children. In the Commission's own words: "There are many imaginative and exciting ways in which the medium can be used to further a child's understanding of a wide range of areas: history, science, literature, the environment, drama, music, fine arts, human relations, other cultures and languages, and basic skills such as reading and mathematics which are crucial to a child's development." (1974 FCC Policy Statement)

Broadcasters have the talent to create children's programs which are as educational as they are entertaining. Yet, today's children have greater access to sensationalistic talk shows, violent cartoons, and adult sitcoms than they do to programming designed to enrich their minds.

The FCC needs to strengthen the guidelines for the Children's Television Act by establishing real policies designed to safeguard the interests of our children. These should include a clearer definition of "educational" programming and a requirement that television stations air at least one hour a day of 30-minute educational shows between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m. in regularly scheduled time slots.

No other regulatory body is in a position to make this happen. Please...America's children are counting on you.

Sincerely,



Patricia Welle  
Family Centers Coordinator  
Allentown, Lehigh County Family Centers

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2/6/96

Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street, N. W.  
Washington, D. C. 20554

Dear Sir or Madam:

It is your duty to America's future to exercise your power to increase the number of educational television programs for children. When so many shows offer nothing but violence and sex, it is vital that appropriate alternatives be provided, before the brains of the next generation plunge deeper into the abyss of disuse.

I was appalled to hear that members of Congress actually thought that Westinghouse was doing a bad thing by asking CBS to show three hours of educational television a week, even going so far as to call it "legalized extortion." Heaven forbid that children should ever walk away from hours of staring at the tube and actually have *learned* something. Three hours are actually insignificant, if one realizes that there are a total of one hundred and twenty-eight hours in a week, and that many children watch tv for more than twenty.

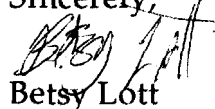
Many stations do claim they provide over three hours of educational shows a week, but I was completely dumbfounded to read that "America's Funniest Home Videos" and "Yogi Bear" were considered educational. I don't think watching people lose their pants, tripping over/ running into things, or a cartoon bear constantly attempting to outwit a park ranger is what is meant by the word "educational."

The garbage that pervades television is everywhere, not just for children. Adults are just as easily ensnared into hours of viewing, allowing their mental activity to descend to a vegetable-like state. But the human race always manages to harbor hope, that just maybe if the minds of children are

properly stimulated, they could go on to achieve greatness. Parents obviously encourage their children to tune into the most informative programs, like "Sesame Street," but often parents are not around, and at all hours of the day there is no guarantee that a quality show will be on, on any channel.

Once again, I urge you to do all that you can to both increase and improve children's educational programming. Television is capable of shaping tomorrow's minds--it is up to us to decide whether we want it to be a constant provider of images of violence, an advocate of greed, and meaningless entertainment, or a tool to induce thought and creativity and perhaps spark a thirst for more knowledge. The best choice is obvious.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Betsy Lott", written over the printed name.

Betsy Lott

7 Muir Lane

Austin, TX 78746



EX PARTE OR LATE FILED

E. Frederick Lang, M. D.  
211 Lothrop Road  
Grosse Pointe, MI 48236-3529

RECEIVED  
FEB 15 1996  
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February 2, 1996

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93-48

Federal Communications Commission  
Office of the Secretary, Room 222  
1919 M Street NW  
Washington, D. C. 20554

Dear Friends:

This is a statement in favor of more (and better) educational television programming for children.

Some parents have time, inclination, and ability to help in the education of their children. Other parents lack one, two, or three of those qualities. For the latter, television frequently takes over as a significant learning experience for the child. I do not consider "The Jetsons," "Mighty Morphin Power Rangers," and "America's Funniest Home Videos" educational experiences, although some, but not all, might be acceptable as entertainment.

With the increase in the amount of time children spend watching TV, we are wasting a wonderful resource if we are not providing educational material. Providing adult material instead converts the waste into damage.

I strongly believe that Westinghouse, and CBS, should be allowed to increase educational programming voluntarily. This will only add to the benefits provided by organizations like the Center for Media Education.

Anything to improve and expand the educational influence of TV will eventually advance the status of the United States in a rapidly progressing world.

Sincerely,

E. Frederick Lang

E. Frederick Lang

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